

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Safety in Your Backyard: The Residential Fallout Shelter during the Cold War

STUDENT: Raina J. Regan

DEGREE: Master of Science in Historic Preservation

COLLEGE: Architecture and Planning

DATE: May, 2010

PAGES: 120

The impact of the Cold War on architecture in the United States is exemplified in the promotion and construction of fallout shelters. The development of the hydrogen bomb by the United States and Soviet Union in the first half of the 1950s increased fears of the far-reaching effect nuclear war could have on public health and safety. Government agencies, such as the Office of Civil Defense, promoted the widespread construction and use of the fallout shelter as a safeguard against human annihilation in the event of nuclear war. This thesis examines the various types of residential fallout shelters designed by public and private entities. The location of the fallout shelter within the family residence had the largest impact on the style and construction method adopted. This thesis investigates a wide variety of examples and techniques used to encourage fallout shelter construction. An in-depth discussion of the preservation of the residential shelter completes the text, including two examples of current preservation practices.